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Editorial

Rampant violence and cheating mark recently concluded elections

The recently concluded polls will go down as one of the bloodiest and most fraud-ridden elections in the history of the puppet republic. The filth and violence of the 2004 polls demonstrate anew that reactionary elections can never become a democratic means of installing leaders that genuinely represent the people's interests.

Even before the election, the Arroyo regime had already perpetrated rampant fraud when it used government funds and resources for its campaign. A variety of dirty tactics were also employed to nullify the candidacy or put in doubt the status of Arroyo's principal rivals for the presidency.

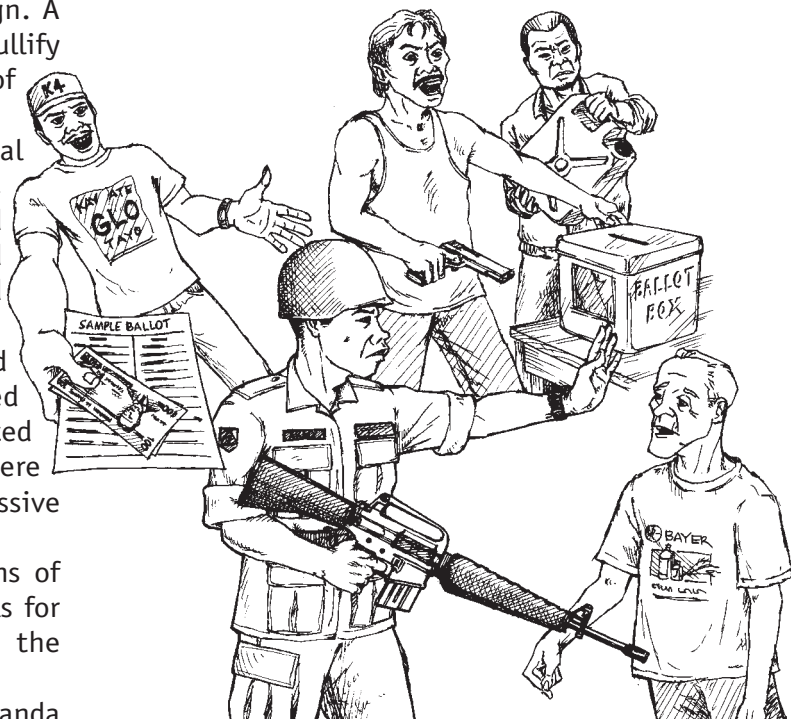
In addition, reactionaries led by National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, the military, police and other ultra-Rightist elements launched a systematic campaign of terror, murder and slander against progressive parties and candidates.

Consequently, out of over 140 people killed and a still undetermined number victimized through harassment and other election-related human rights violations, almost a third were members of Bayan Muna (BM) and other progressive parties.

On the eve of the election, the same means of fraud and manipulation directed at Arroyo's rivals for the presidency were likewise used against the progressives.

The military brazenly spread black propaganda

against progressive parties and candidates and intervened in the conduct of elections in the progressives' bailiwicks in Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, the Visayas and many areas in Mindanao. On election day itself, the AFP blocked votes for progressives and Arroyo's rivals. They prevented voters from reaching their precincts, dictated whom to vote for, "counted" votes inside military camps and implemented "dagdag-bawas"



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(vote-shaving) and other means of fraud to shift votes for progressives to parties supported by the Arroyo regime such as Akbayan, ANAD, Aksyon Sam-bayanan and Alab Katipunan.

Immediately after the election, rabidly reactionary candidates and their collaborators among COMELEC officials and the military maneuvered to try to have the poll canvass results favor them. They snatched and burned ballots in precincts and municipalities where their rivals, especially the progressives, had a strong showing. They inflicted violence on and threatened COMELEC officials. They even tried to gag the mass media for reporting on electoral fraud. The Arroyo regime declared forthwith that it would use force against anyone attempting to launch protest actions against cheating.

It is the people's right to cry out their indignation against the violence and fraud that marked the election and to expose the polls' futility. Progressive parties and candidates may unite with other candidates and forces who were likewise victimized by fraud and

violence, and arouse and mobilize the broad masses of the people to denounce the cheating regime, strip it of any pretensions of having been legitimately elected, and prevent it from using its supposed mandate from the recently concluded polls to resume its antipeople policies.

These issues may be linked to the people's worsening socio-economic problems which have resulted in widespread revulsion for the regime.

These developments bring to the fore the fact that genuine democracy and meaningful change cannot be fashioned through hollow electoral processes. They are forged by the people's militant actions in streets, factories, schools, communities and villages. They acquire form and substance through the revolutionary movement raging in the broad countryside and in various parts of the archipelago, that slowly erodes reactionary power and establishes organs of genuine people's democratic power. The correctness of armed struggle as the principal means of attaining basic social change becomes ever clearer. **AB**


NPA condemns arson incidents in Isabela

The New People's Army (NPA) Benito Tesorio Command in Isabela strongly condemned the election-related violence and cheating perpetrated by the Dy family in the province. On May 11, armed men burned ballots and other election paraphernalia in the towns of Jones and San Mariano. The Dys maliciously blamed the NPA for it.

According to the command's spokesperson Ka Delio Baladon, these were perpetrated by the 5th ID, private goons and cohorts of the Dy family when it had become clear that their rivals had routed San Mariano mayoralty candidate Alexander Dy and Faustino Dy Jr., a candidate for governor.

As early as the morning of May 11, Alexander Dy had already threatened poll watchers and COMELEC members who were counting ballots in the San Mariano municipal hall. At around 10 o'clock at night, men aboard two vans suddenly assaulted the municipal hall. They rained bullets on the municipal hall for close to thirty minutes and snatched six ballot boxes before leaving.

Meanwhile, at around 10 p.m. that same night, 16 men entered the Jones municipal hall while the ballot counting was taking place. They ordered everyone to lie on the floor facedown, took away their cellphones and burned down the office and all of the tally

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sheets that had come in from various precincts. Up to 40% of the ballots were burned.

According to data gathered by the National Democratic Front in Northeastern Luzon, the Dy clique flooded all of Isabela with money and food on the day of the election. They also massed AFP troops in the barangays of Benito Soliven, Ueg, Casala, Macayucayu, Alidabad and San Mariano as well as in villages within the Forest Region, Jones and Echague to intimidate voters.

The Dy family also ordered anew the closure of Bombo Radio DZNC on election day due to its frequent hardhitting commentaries against the clan's antipeople policies.

The arson incidents in Jones and San Mariano are part of the Dys' scheme to create large-scale anarchy so that a failure of elections would be declared in the province and the canvass results nullified.

With their scheme's failure, the Dy clique launched a relentless campaign of intimidation against COMELEC personnel at the provincial level, forcing the board

of canvassers to resign and to have the counting of votes suspended until the COMELEC could send in replacements. The progressive and popular former broadcaster Gracia Padaca maintained a big lead over Governor Dy in the Isabela gubernatorial race according to both the COMELEC's official count and NAMFREL's unofficial canvass.

The Dy family has held tight and bloody rein over Isabela's politics and economy over the last 40 years. The clan has been able to maintain and expand its dynasty by using its bureaucrat-capitalist power. It has also effectively used the military and police as its private army, aside from using goons and criminal elements in the province.

Since the 1960s, the Dys have not hesitated to use violence against anyone challenging their power. They also have a long and bloody record of violating the human rights of the people and the revolutionary movement in the province.



Strong opposition from the people and the middle forces, the courage of those who challenged the Dys' control and the vigorous advance of armed struggle, the mass movement and progressive politics in the province were important factors in weakening the Dy family's decades-long domination. Thus, four out of seven clan members running for various positions lost. Aside from Faustino Jr. and Alexander, Benjamin Dy Jr. also lost the mayoralty race in Angadanan and Eloisa Dy-Valle in her bid for councilor in Cauayan City. AB

AFP behind electoral fraud and violence—NDF-Eastern Visayas

The National Democratic Front (NDF) in Eastern Visayas belied the AFP's accusations that the New People's Army was behind reported incidents of electoral violence in the region.

In a statement, NDF-Eastern Visayas spokesperson Fr. Santiago Salas denied that the NPA was responsible for the abduction of two poll watchers in Motiong, Samar and for a ballot snatching incident in Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar on May 11. On the contrary, he said, it was elements of the 8th ID who terrorized and harassed voters on May 10, especially in hinterland villages of Matuguinao, Gandara, San Jorge, Motiong, Paranas, Pinabacdao, Basey and Borongan towns in Samar island. In Tabango, Leyte,

said Salas, the military prevented 80 families from voting.

According to Fr. Salas, the conduct of the recently concluded polls is proof that the people are only being fooled and victimized during reactionary elections.

Meanwhile, a correspondence report from the region also put the lie to the news that seven Red fighters were killed in a defensive battle in Barangay Palanit, San Isidro, Northern Samar on the morning of May 6. Apart from the fact that all of the NPA guerrillas were able to retreat safely, they were also able to inflict a still undetermined number of casualties on the 20th IB troops they engaged. AB

NDF-Mindanao logs poll violence

It was the Macapagal-Arroyo regime that was mainly responsible for the rampant fraud and violence in Mindanao in the recently concluded election. According to NDF-Mindanao spokesperson Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos, of the 82 incidents of electoral violence that occurred from April to May 12, sixty-five (65) or almost 80% were the handiwork of the state's armed forces and the administration party. These incidents, which included ambushes, raids, abductions and illegal arrests, massacres, strafing, beatings and the issuance of grave threats resulted in the death of 47 individuals.

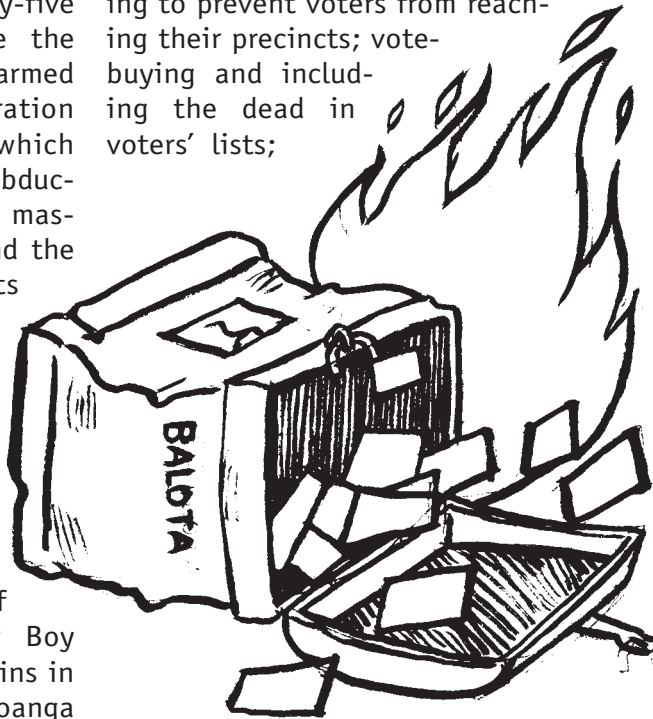
Among the most prominent are three murder cases in Compostela Valley: the killing of three Bayan Muna (BM) members in Laac; of Rodolfo Gogo, a BM supporter from Monkayo; and of Mt. Diwata Alliance chair Boy Galang. Four barangay captains in the second district of Zamboanga

del Sur were also killed in succession.

The Arroyo administration employed all the means it could think of to cheat not only its rival candidates but progressive parties as well. They included, among others, spreading black propaganda and issuing threats; maneuvering to prevent voters from reaching their precincts; vote-buying and including the dead in voters' lists;

deliberately stalling the counting in military camps especially in Moro communities; perpetrating "dagdag-bawas" (literally "add-subtract") or vote-shaving by switching certificates of canvass; bribing COMELEC officials; and using government funds, personnel and facilities.

Noticeably, there were no incidents attributed to the Jemaah Islamiyah group, contrary to the regime's warnings prior to the election. Also noticeable was the fact that only a few incidents could be blamed on the New People's Army (NPA), again contrary to the regime's propaganda that the principal threat of violence comes from the NPA. Said Ka Oris, most of the incidents linked to the NPA had to do with implementing revolutionary justice or hitting legitimate military targets and had nothing to do with the election. AB



Military, RPA campaign against progressive parties

The military and the bandit Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPA) in Panay and Negros openly campaigned against Bayan Muna and other progressive parties, and likewise, against rival candidates of the Arroyo regime for congressional and local government posts.

A few days before the election, troops of the 47th IB were massively dispatched to areas considered as bailiwicks of progressive parties, especially in Iloilo. AFP

Civil Relations Group chief Maj. Oscar Lasangue and Capt. Leon Marquez of the 47th IB openly campaigned against the progressives. Prior to this, there were reports that the RPA was actively campaigning against Bayan Muna and for Alab Katipunan which was also running in the party-list election as a front organization of the RPA. In March, the military accompanied members of the anti-communist Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (ANAD) in putting

up posters and distributing leaflets against Bayan Muna and other progressive parties.

From May 7 to 11, the 11th IB, 12th IB and 61st IB with the help of the RPA and two PNP provincial commands launched an extensive military operation. They concentrated on the fifth district of Negros Occidental, preventing the people from voting for progressive parties and coercing them to vote for Gloria Arroyo's brother-in-law Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo. AB

Philippine government and people drowning in debt

It is estimated that by the end of 2004, the reactionary government's overall debt will equal if not surpass the total value of the local economy—an indicator of continued economic collapse and corruption in the reactionary government. The ever-growing debt has resulted in the grave deprivation of basic necessities for the Filipino people and the imposition of an ever-growing burden on their shoulders.

In February, the Philippine government's overall external and domestic debt had come to P4.13 trillion. The figure already represents 95% of the overall value of local production in the country from February 2003 to February 2004 of P4.32 trillion. By the end of 2004, total government indebtedness is expected to equal the overall value of the local economy.

If we add the P1 trillion owed by local governments and government corporations as well as government-guaranteed private sector debts, the Philippines' total public sector debt would amount to P5.5 trillion or 125% of what the economy is worth.

Philippine public debt continues to rise without any corresponding economic growth. Compared to February last year, the country's overall public debt swelled by 17.5% (or over P600 million). Meanwhile, according to government statistics, local production in 2003 grew by only 4.5% (or P33.64 billion).

Aside from the debts of the Philippine public sector, external debts of the private sector now amount to over \$30 billion. The total external debt of the

Philippines' private and public sectors combined comes to over \$57 billion (equivalent to P3.2 trillion).

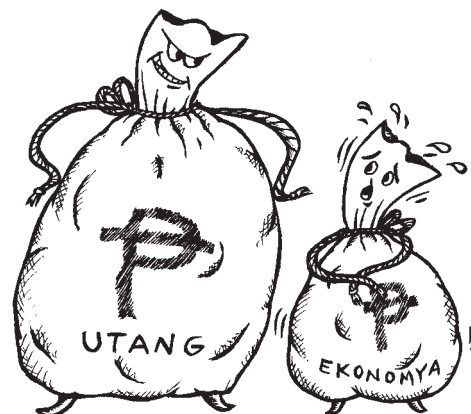
This financial scarcity is continually worsened by corruption and huge shortfalls in tax collections, the outright plunder and theft perpetrated by bureaucrats, gargantuan military expenditures and other antipeople, inutile and showcase programs and mispriorities. Further damage is wrought by imperialists and their local bureaucrat-comprador cohorts who plunder the country.

Consequently, the budget deficit that keeps growing year after year is irresolvable. The 2003 budget deficit of P199.9 billion is bigger by 32.86% compared to the P132.2 billion budget deficit of 1999. If we include the deficits incurred by local governments and state corporations, the government's deficit already amounted to P244.6 billion a year ago.

To avoid overshooting the targeted P199 billion budget deficit for 2004, the government and public sector debt must be increased.

The reactionary government has done nothing to resolve the hemorrhage in the financial system but to borrow even more to pay for previous debts and defray current necessary expenses, and to adopt "austerity measures" by cutting back on basic services, especially for the poor.

Mounting interest payments and other debt service further worsen the problem. Because the money for debt service itself is borrowed, this further condemns the government and the people to drown in a sea of debt. An economy already suffering from a dearth of capital and produc-



tion is being made to pass through the wringer even more.

The government has allocated 31.2% of the national budget for debt service in 2004—up from 18% in 1999. In the last four years, the amount earmarked for debt service has grown by 97.5%, even as the government relentlessly skimps on spending for basic social services. **AB**

An endless cycle of debt

The Philippines' worsening debt burden is rooted in its neocolonial, backward, unindustrialized and bankrupt condition. The country continues to incur losses in neocolonial trade, and must therefore keep on borrowing to make up for such deficits.

The crisis of oversupply and depressed prices of raw materials and traditional agricultural products (sugar, timber and copra, among others) in the global market began to intensify since the latter part of the 1970s.

Since the late 1980s, the crisis of oversupply of semimanufactured goods (electronic parts and garments, among others) worsened. The implementation of the imperialist "globalization" policy, especially the liberalization of trade and investments, has exa-

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World Bank—milking cow of the biggest imperialist corporations

In the past twelve years, the World Bank (WB) has poured billions into energy projects, among them the construction of large dams, the extraction of minerals and oil and laying down oil pipelines. These projects have resulted in the massive dislocation of people's lives and livelihoods and destroyed the environment in areas where they have been launched.

The projects have been carried out without any regard for the people's welfare and despite their strong opposition.

Along with siphoning off the natural resources of backward countries, these projects worsen the socio-economic and political problems of host countries. For instance, people living in affected areas are driven out and robbed of their lands, and various forms of repression are unleashed against the downtrodden people who oppose the projects.

Worse, the only real beneficiaries are five of the world's ten largest companies and ten other gigantic corporations. Most of them are American imperialist companies heavily endorsed by top US government officials to become recipients of the World Bank's favor. Most of them have likewise been exposed

and are now under investigation in the US and elsewhere for fraud, racketeering, bribery, market manipulation, and/or human rights violations.

The World Bank has already poured over \$28 billion into these projects from 1992 to 2004. After the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, most of these projects have been earmarked for the "reconstruction" of Iraq and for siphoning and exporting Iraqi oil. This is in exchange for the \$32 billion contributed by these companies to Bush's election campaign in the US in 2000.

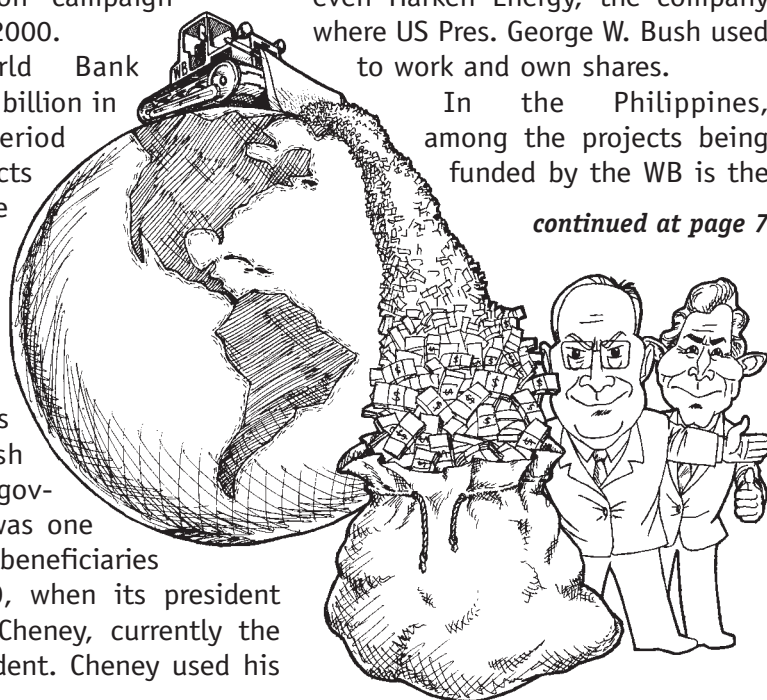
The World Bank poured \$10.7 billion in the same period for oil projects alone. The number one beneficiary has been Halliburton, a company run by cronies of the Bush family and government. It was one of the largest beneficiaries in 1996-2000, when its president was Richard Cheney, currently the US vice president. Cheney used his

vast political influence to secure loans from the WB and other banks. With support from Bush and Cheney, Halliburton is now also among the companies benefiting from fat "reconstruction" contracts and projects for the extraction and export of oil from Iraq.

Shell, BP Amoco and ExxonMobil, the world's three largest oil companies, also received World Bank funds. Among the other WB "beneficiaries" are scandal-ridden companies such as Enron, El Paso Energy, General Electric, and even Harken Energy, the company where US Pres. George W. Bush used to work and own shares.

In the Philippines, among the projects being funded by the WB is the

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acerbated this condition since the advent of the 1990s. The Philippines has become an even bigger dumping ground for the surplus goods of imperialists, and this has wrought havoc on local industrial and agricultural production and further destroyed the country's produc-

tive forces.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997 crippled the Philippine economy by bursting the bubble of speculative capital. This resulted in a massive financial crisis that gripped other countries in Asia and Latin America as well. With no recovery as yet in sight from previous crises, an intense recession in the centers

of capitalism followed. The US and especially the backward countries still suffer from this recession.

The country and the global capitalist system's economic trajectory indicates the impending outbreak of an even graver financial crisis and the Philippine economy's further inundation in a sea of debt in the coming years.



Ka Boyet, fine revolutionary cadre and commander

On March 9, 2004, Joselito "Ka Boyet" Talens was slain in a firefight in San Felipe, Zambales. Seven other comrades, Ka Chris, Ka Raffy, Ka Esie, Ka Deya, Ka Emil, Ka Marco and Ka Archie, were also martyred in the encounter.

Ka Boyet was born on December 31, 1964. He was the second of five siblings in a petty bourgeois family. Becoming politically conscious in 1982 while studying dentistry at the University of the East, he joined the Kabataang Makabayan the following year and became coordinator of an alliance of progressive organizations in the university. He later transferred to the Centro Escolar University in 1984, where he led organizing work for the revolution.

He joined the Party in 1985 when he returned to his hometown in Nueva Ecija. He then embraced Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the revolutionary theory of the working class. He strived to remold himself, turn his back on his petty bourgeois class origins and uphold the proletarian standpoint, viewpoint and method.

Ka Boyet became the deputy secretary of the Party branch in a school in Cabanatuan City in 1985. The following year, he became the deputy secretary of the staff organ on Youth and Students under the Provincial Committee. He decided to join the New People's Army in June 1987. The NPA was then in the midst of implementing the erroneous line of "strategic counter-offensive" and the Party organization in the NPA unit where he belonged had been dissolved.

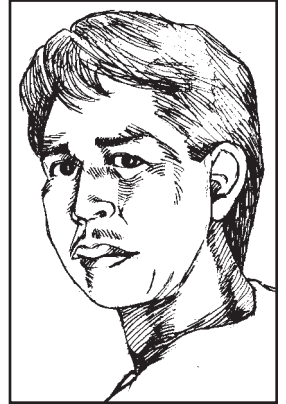
Despite the difficulties he experienced, Ka Boyet worked hard to carry out his tasks as the unit's political officer. He gave political and Party courses to the Red fighters, led assessments and criticism and self-criticism sessions, and strove to strengthen the comrades' commitment.

In 1988, Ka Boyet temporarily lost contact with the Party and people's army when a Party meeting at the regional level was attacked, resulting in the capture of several leading Party cadres and NPA commanders. When he was able to make contact and regroup, he joined an NPA unit implementing the anti-infiltration hysteria. This seriously affected Ka Boyet's morale and led him to leave the movement for more than two years. Even as he was outside the movement, he informed concerned comrades of all of his activities.

In 1991, Ka Boyet once again worked full-time for the revolution. Because of his generally sound political and military record, he was appointed to the region's military staff and joined its intelligence unit.

In 1992, the Party launched the Second Great Rectification Movement after summing up more than a decade's experience. Ka Boyet grasped and embraced it completely, and through it gained an appreciation of his own experiences in their proper

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Sual coal-fired power plant in Pangasinan which is being constructed by the Belgian-owned ABB Alstom and The Southern Company of the US. The World Bank is also funding the construction of an oil-fired power plant in Bataan under Covanta Energy of the US.

Most of the oil projects being funded by the WB are not geared to satisfy the local demand for petroleum products in their host coun-

tries. Eighty-two (82%) percent of the projects are focused on building infrastructure to extract oil for Western Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and Japan.

Its funding of multinational corporations, especially oil companies, runs counter to the WB's much vaunted programs for a "world without poverty." Even the institution's staunchest apologists have raised their objections. In a study commissioned by no less

than the World Bank, the Extractive Industries Review (EIR) has recommended a halt to funding oil companies. The EIR revealed that most of the projects are riddled with irregularities and controversies. It is no secret to the World Bank that massive violations of human rights and corruption by its cohorts among the local ruling classes are being perpetrated in areas where these projects have been set up.

AB



context. With stronger resolve, he never stopped working for the revolution since then. Ka Boyet was one of the many comrades in the region who contributed immensely in revitalizing the Party and the revolutionary movement under the rectification movement's guidance.

In April 1994, Ka Boyet took part in guerrilla zone preparation for what was to become Front 2 in northeastern Tarlac. Aside from serving as a member of the Party Provincial Committee in Tarlac, he was also secretary of a Front Committee and commander of the NPA unit under it. Ka Boyet and his comrades faced tremendous odds in establishing a guerrilla front in that part of Tarlac. Its terrain was composed of vast plains without a mountain or hill for a rear, crisscrossed by roads, with hardly any thickets they could use for cover and close to the AFP Northern Luzon Command's headquarters. Ka Boyet and his fellow guerrilla forces persevered in this kind of terrain.

Based on his demonstrated leadership and his steadfastness as a Party cadre, his diligent adherence to the Party line and his concrete contributions to the revolutionary movement since 1983, Ka Boyet was elected member of the Regional Committee in its plenum in April 2000.

In 2001, the revolutionary forces in Tarlac suffered serious setbacks due to successive defensive battles that wiped out two NPA units in the western part of the province.

Enemy military operations raged on, aimed at completely crushing the revolutionary forces in the province. But the comrades frustrated the enemy's scheme, and not only preserved themselves but restrengthened the Party, the people's army and the mass base.

Ka Boyet was among those relied upon by the Party and the NPA in this critical stage in Tarlac's history. He was designated as the new secretary of the Front Committee and commander of the provincial guerrilla unit based in the area where the major defensive battles occurred. Ka Boyet led successive victorious tactical offensives, which though small had a large political impact. The fighting spirit of the people's army and the masses soared.

Ka Boyet was later deployed to take on the challenge of expanding and consolidating the revolutionary movement in Zambales and Pangasinan. His unit integrated with and conducted mass work among the Aetas and other poor peasants in the area. At the time of his death, Ka Boyet was also a member of the Zambales-Pangasinan Party Committee and the secretary of the education committee under it, secretary of the Party branch in his platoon and the unit's political instructor. AB

Drawn from a message from the CPP Regional Committee and NPA Regional Operational Command in Central Luzon, dated March 11, 2004.

The historic Battle of Dien Bien Phu

On May 7, the Vietnamese people commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. This battle was the first instance in the history of humankind that a small colony clobbered a big colonialist power. In the 1960s, Ho Chi Minh, leader of the communist party and first president of Vietnam, summed it up and said that the Battle in Dien Bien Phu achieved "a glorious victory for the Vietnamese people and also for the forces of peace, democracy and socialism in the world."

In this battle, the Vietnam People's Army (VNPA) crushed the bigger and more sophisticated army of imperialist France within 55 days. The 16,000 enemy forces besieged in Dien Bien Phu were either crushed or captured. More than 10,000 Vietnamese patriots laid down their lives.

The courage shown by the Vietnamese people in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu shook the whole of Europe. It forced France to end a near-century of occupying Vietnam and other countries in Indochina. In his speech commemorating the battle, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, then the VNPA Commander and a member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, said that the victory in Dien Bien Phu proved that a determined country can defeat a foreign occupation force however powerful it may be.

Even before the battle of Dien Bien Phu, the Vietnamese people's revolutionary movement formed part of a new wave of victorious revolutionary struggles in various parts of the world after the Second World War. The establishment of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe began in 1948 and the new-

democratic revolution in China triumphed in October 1949. In January 1950, the Soviet Union, China and other people's republics recognized the newly established Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

But the imperialist forces tried to reverse the victories achieved by the Vietnamese people and prevent the spread of the revolutionary current to other countries in Indochina and Asia. With the blessings of US imperialism, Gen. Henri Navarre, chief commander of the French expeditionary troops in Indochina outlined the so-called "Navarre Plan" in mid-1953. It sought to wrest the strategic initiative from the Vietnamese within 18 months and reestablish imperialist domination over the entire Indochinese peninsula. The Vietnamese people resolutely opposed the plan.

The Party, the people's army and the Vietnamese people further strengthened their fighting spirit and solidarity to defend the victories they had gained when the Party launched five land reform campaigns in the liberated areas from April 1953 to July 1954. Simultaneously, a campaign was launched to rectify certain shortcomings in mass work.

By December 1953, after intense debate and exchange of views, the Party Central Committee decided to launch a daring war of a strategic character to frustrate the "Navarre Plan." The target of the campaign: to destroy Dien Bien Phu, the center of French military power in north-western Vietnam.

The campaign was placed under General Giap's command. With the few pieces of equipment they had then, the newly formed

artillery and infantry units of the Vietnamese people immediately began the construction of hundreds of kilometers of roadway that went deep into the forests and mountains and out towards the field of battle. The system of roads and trenches became the conduit for troops, military equipment, supplies and communication from the liberated areas in North Vietnam to Dien Bien Phu. Heavy weaponry like artillery were also placed in crucial points along this network of roads. The Vietnamese troops carried the cannons to the high mountains and down to the valleys even as the enemy continuously rained bullets on them.

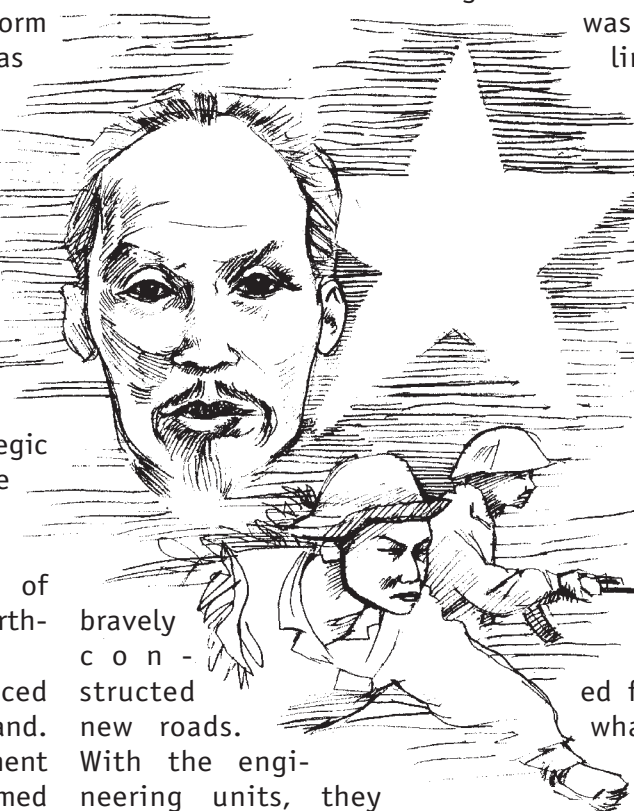
As proof of the enthusiastic response of the Vietnamese masses to the slogan "all for the front, all for victory," 200,000 volunteers devoted over 3,000,000 work-days to ensure the victory of the offensive on Dien Bien Phu. Tens of thousands of youth, who were members of shock brigades

bravely
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With the engi-
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also courageously defused the delayed-action bombs planted by the enemy along communication lines. They hauled rice, food and ammunition for the front, using all available modes of transportation such as bicycles, carabao and cattle-drawn carts and row boats, among others. The bravery and sacrifice demonstrated then by the millions of Vietnamese were awe-inspiring.

That same month, VNPA troops began to launch attacks on the northwest. The Vietnamese troops wiped out large numbers of enemy forces in the course of the offensive, and liberated large chunks of territory previously held by the French. In the meantime, the Pathet Lao (the revolutionary movement in Laos) forces and the Vietnamese People's Volunteers in Central Laos also launched diversionary attacks to draw the enemy's attention from Dien Bien Phu even as they worked together to advance people's war in Laos. At the same time, guerrilla warfare was intensified behind enemy lines in North and Central Vietnam.

With the firm unity and coordination of the people and the people's army, the enemy was rendered deaf and blind. The French forces succumbed to a ruse by the VNPA that the Vietnamese offensive was over. On March 13, a 50,000-strong VNPA force launched one of the largest offensives against the confused and scattered French forces. The Vietnamese besieged the large enemy force in the extremely isolated fortress of Dien Bien Phu in what has gone down in history as one of the greatest battles of the 20th century. **AB**



Cuba braces itself for US invasion

Up to a million people demonstrated in the Cuban capital of Havana on May 14 to expose and oppose new measures taken by the US government to pressure Cuba and the government of Pres. Fidel Castro. In the face of the US' intensified pressure and threats of an invasion, the people's government has raised the military preparedness of the 11.2 million Cubans.

US Pres. George W. Bush has recently tightened the US trade embargo against Cuba that has been in force for more than four decades. The Bush regime also allocated an initial \$59 million for various activities and operations to attack the Caribbean country. The largest portion (\$36 million) was earmarked to fund counterrevolutionary groups inside Cuba. Meanwhile, \$18 million was allocated for a military plane that would regularly fly within Cuban airspace to broadcast propaganda against the Castro government.

Restrictions on dollar remittances of Cubans living in the US to their relatives in the island were heightened. The remittances that come to \$1.2 billion annually are a significant help to the Cuban economy. The US had previously allowed annual visits by American-based Cubans to their families in Cuba, but has since reduced this to one visit in three years.

Even those who oppose Castro's leadership strongly condemn the US' most recent anti-democratic and counterrevolutionary measures.

NPA seizes 4 firearms in Western Mindanao ambushes

THE New People's Army in Western Mindanao seized four rifles in two ambushes launched on May 11. According to correspondence reports from the region, four enemy forces were also killed in these offensives.

In Tinuyop, Leon B. Postigo, Zamboanga del Norte, guerrillas of the NPA's Front Feliciano-A confiscated three M14 rifles when they ambushed patrolling soldiers coming from Barangay Sipakong on May 11. Three CAFGU elements were killed in the fighting.

That same day, in Concepcion, Misamis Occidental, NPA forces from Front Monterosa District I ambushed 12 armed goons who went on a rampage when their boss, ex-Col. Benjamin Pilota, won as mayor of Concepcion. A carbine rifle was confiscated from a slain CAFGU element who belonged to Pilota's private army.

Oil prices hiked anew

OIL prices were raised anew on May 18. Gasoline and diesel prices rose by P1 per liter and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by P1 per kilo. The oil companies have announced another hike in the prices of petroleum products in June.

Ever since the reactionary government deregulated the oil industry in April 1996, prices of petroleum products have gone up by over 250%. In recent months, oil prices have gone up by as much as P5.

Because of deregulation, foreign oil companies have unbridledly amassed mounting profits by bleeding the people dry.

Israel massacres Palestinian refugees

THE Israeli Defense Forces massacred Palestinians in the Rafah, Nusseirat and al-Bureij refugee camps in the Gaza Strip from May 18 to 20. It was the most heinous massacre of Palestinians in a year.

Israelis opened fire on 3,000 Palestinians protesting Israel's demolition of their houses. The Palestinians fought with rifles, grenades and stones. Forty-one Palestinian youth and children were killed and over 80 others were wounded when Israel launched "Operation Rainbow" which involved the demolition of hundreds of houses, the destruction of roads and the eviction of people from Rafah. Up to 1,600 people lost their homes.

The demolitions were carried out because the area was allegedly being used as a base and armory by Palestinian terrorists.

The destruction of houses and infrastructure, which was accompanied by the indiscriminate firing of missiles from tanks and helicopters, has been strongly condemned by Palestinians and the world's peoples. Leaders of the United Nations considered them war crimes and grave violations of international humanitarian law. On May 19, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling on Israel to stop the demolitions and comply with international law. As before, the US was the only country that refused to sign the resolution.

Meanwhile, Palestinian militants said that the dastardly massacre has only strengthened the resolve of the Palestinian people to wage resistance and pledged to carry on the uprising until they free themselves from Israeli occupation and oppression.